

A Brief Sketch from 'Hansard' showing the Reasons why Separate Schools were established when granting a Constitution to the North-west Territories.

On the 12th March, 1875, the Hon. Mr. Mackenzie, then Premier, when introducing the Act to amend and consolidate the laws respecting the Territories, is reported in the Commons *Hansard*, page 653, as follows :—

As he intimated on a former occasion, the Government decided some time ago to establish an entirely independent Government in those Territories. To a certain extent it would have been advisable, before such an Act was passed, if it could be done, to have the boundary of Manitoba rectified, but that was a matter which it was difficult to deal with at the present moment.

In the Bill, as first introduced, no reference was made to the subject of education, and this omission was made the subject of comment at a later stage of the debate.

The following extracts from the speech of the Hon. Edward Blake, then an independent Liberal, gives his views on the Bill submitted :—

The task which the Ministry had set for itself was the most important it was possible to conceive. To found primary institutions under which we hope to see hundreds of thousands, and the more sanguine of us think, millions of men and families settled and flourishing, was one of the noblest undertakings that could be entered upon by any legislative body, and it was no small indication of the power and true position of this Dominion that Parliament should be engaged to-day in that important task. He agreed with the hon. member for Kingston (Sir John A. Macdonald) that the task was one that required time, consideration and deliberation, and they must take care that no false steps were made in such a work. He did not agree with that right hon. gentleman that the Government ought to repeal his errors. The right hon. gentleman had tried the institutions for the North-west Territories which he now asked the House to frame, and for the same reason as he had given to-day—that it would be better for the Dominion Government to keep matters in their own hands and decide what was best for the future. He (Mr. Blake) believed that it was essential to our obtaining a large immigration to the North-west that *we should tell the people beforehand what those rights were to be in the country in which we invited them to settle.*

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He regarded it as essential, under the circumstances of the country, and in view of the deliberation during the last few days, that a general principle should be laid down in the Bill with respect to public instruction. He did believe that we ought not to introduce into that territory the heartburnings and difficulties with which certain other portions of the Dominion and other countries had been afflicted. It seemed to him, having regard to the fact that, as far as we could expect at present, the general character of that population